

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS QUITO 001818

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EC](#)

SUBJECT: PALACIO REVIEWS HIS FIRST 100 DAYS

REF: A. QUITO 1803

[B](#). QUITO 1787

[1](#). (SBU) Summary: Highlighting his proposed reform package as the means to realize his vision for Ecuador in the year 2020, President Palacio made his fourth televised address to the nation on August 2. Domestic themes and the president's beloved universal health care scheme dominated the speech. On the international front, he reiterated his commitment to protect national sovereignty as the cornerstone of his foreign policy; he highlighted the GOE's intention to make combating trafficking in persons a top priority (Reftel A). Intended to generate support for his government's reform agenda, the speech failed to receive widespread media coverage. End summary.

Long on Vision, Short on Substance

[2](#). (U) In a bid to shore up support after recent polls revealed dips in his popularity and credibility (from roughly 60% on taking office to 37% at 100 days), President Palacio addressed the nation on August 2 to review his first 100 days in office. His televised speech was preceded by scenes of protesters marching in the streets and police repression in the days leading up to Gutierrez' removal from office. These images were immediately followed by a straight-faced Palacio declaring that he had put an end to the turmoil that had characterized the former president's rule and that he was moving forward with his pledge to rebuild the country.

[3](#). (U) Palacio touched on a wide range of themes during the 30-minute broadcast. Much of the speech dealt with his reform proposals and efforts to generate a national dialogue for change through the drafting of a popular referendum to be held December 11. Accusing Congress of refusing to "cure the sick," he indirectly criticized Congress for returning his reform proposal last week. On the economy, he cited increasing production as the basis of his economic program, with an emphasis on increasing social services. Regarding his foreign policy, Palacio gave his usual pitch about the importance of a country's dignity and sovereignty. He avoided mention of recent setbacks with the international financial institutions, linkages with Venezuela, or the possible return of ex-president Gutierrez (Reftel B).

Comment

[4](#). (SBU) Palacio's speech was an attempt to address growing disenchantment over the slow pace of promised reforms. However, the long-winded late-night speech failed to inspire, and was given short shrift by most major media, reinforcing the impression of an inexperienced government increasingly adrift. The indirect blame of Congress only compounded damage to already strained relations.
MEMMOTT